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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [MOPS](#) [CH](#) [TN](#) [KN](#) [JP](#)  
SUBJECT: PACOM COMMANDER FALLON'S DISCUSSION WITH PLA  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF GENERAL GE ZHENFENG

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Daniel  
Shields. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary  
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¶1. (C) President Hu discussed with President Bush the need for the United States and China to view their bilateral relationship from a strategic level with a long-term perspective, PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Ge Zhenfeng told PACOM Commander Admiral Fallon during a May 10 meeting. Beijing is pleased by the developing momentum in China-U.S. military relations, hopes to expand the scope of future exchanges and places great importance on General Guo Boxiong's upcoming visit to the United States. Admiral Fallon urged China to participate more productively in the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement framework (MMCA) to achieve operational results. He invited the PLA to observe a U.S. exercise planned for June in and around Guam, saying the invitation demonstrates U.S. intention to be open and transparent. Ge outlined the PLA's current modernization drive, highlighting six focus areas. Predictably, he raised Taiwan as the most sensitive issue in the bilateral relationship and said the PRC's position is "clear-cut, consistent and firm." Admiral Fallon stated that the U.S. position on Taiwan is equally clear and well understood. End Summary.

Military-to-Military Exchanges  
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¶2. (C) Visiting Commander of U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), Admiral William Fallon met May 10 with PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff Ge Zhenfeng at PLA Headquarters in Beijing. General Ge characterized President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington as a success that allowed for an in-depth exchange of views with President Bush. The two countries' leaders view their bilateral relationship from a strategic, long-term perspective. In keeping with this direction, Ge continued, both militaries should work to expand and institutionalize their exchanges. Pointing to recent educational exchanges, port calls, cooperation in counterterrorism and non-traditional security areas, as well as disaster management, Ge said that he is pleased by the developing momentum in U.S.-China military relations. Beijing places great importance on Central Military Commission Vice Chairman General Guo Boxiong's July visit to the United States and Ge noted his own anticipation for his upcoming visit to

Hawaii. Admiral Fallon responded that while high-level visits are very useful, the two countries must extend their military exchanges down to younger officers and to officers from operational units serving in the field. This will help people with similar interests but different backgrounds to better understand each other. Ge agreed, saying it would be reasonable to expand the scope of future exchanges to include younger officers.

#### Need More Details and a Framework

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¶3. (C) Admiral Fallon stated that as China's military capabilities grow there are more opportunities for the U.S. and Chinese militaries to engage each other. Using the 2001 EP-3 incident as an example, Fallon encouraged the PLA to work in the spirit of the U.S.-China Military Maritime Consultative Agreement framework (MMCA). Fallon said that now is the time to work out a framework for how to handle such encounters so that operational commanders understand what each side must do in a particular situation. This will prevent accidents and build confidence. Ge agreed that the United States and China should not only talk about "big picture" issues but also discuss details.

#### Invitation to Observe Exercise

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¶4. (C) Admiral Fallon stressed the importance of building confidence through open engagement and transparency. He invited the PLA to send representatives to observe an upcoming U.S. joint

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military exercise in the Pacific. Noting that other countries in the region are also being invited to observe, Admiral Fallon stressed that this invitation shows that the United States is open about our intentions in the region. Ge agreed that it is important and useful to observe each other's regional military exercises. He tried to justify the PLA's failure to invite the U.S. to observe last year's exercise with Russia using the argument that because this was the first such exercise, both sides agreed that only a few members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization should be invited to observe.

#### Current State of PLA Modernization

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¶5. (C) Ge began a lengthy monologue in which he described China's military strategy as a "positive defense," which he defined as possessing a self-defense capability that would allow for a "prevailing action." The PLA relies on its own equipment, weaponry and long martial tradition to defend China's territorial integrity and sovereignty. To achieve this strategy, the PLA is focusing on improvements in six specific areas. First, the PLA is pressing ahead with the revolution in military affairs (RMA) but with "Chinese characteristics." Ge said that while the quality of the PLA's weaponry is not yet "satisfactory," the PLA recognizes the need to modernize its information infrastructure and capabilities, often referred to as "informationalization." Ge said that the PLA's informationalization will then drive the PLA's mechanization. Second, the PLA is striving to enhance its military readiness, an issue that has received much attention from the PRC's highest levels. The PLA's objective is to be prepared to win a regional war under the most difficult scenarios and with multiple threats. Third, the PLA is encouraging the integration of its services. Fourth, the PLA is

encouraging the independent development of science and technology and hopes to be able to "leap frog" development stages to increase military fighting capabilities. Fifth, the PLA will continue the program it implemented in 2003 to build a talented core of people. Ge described this effort as a "strategic project to improve the quality of five corps of people: commanders, staff, scientists, technical specialists and NCO's." Sixth, the PLA is enhancing its efforts to run the military according to law. The PLA is attempting to instill loyalty, valor and discipline in the troops by adhering strictly to newly promulgated rules and regulations in order to improve their battlefield effectiveness, Ge said.

Taiwan Policy Clear-Cut, Consistent and Firm  
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¶6. (C) Ge cautioned Admiral Fallon that the Taiwan issue remains the most sensitive issue in the bilateral relationship, stating that Beijing's position on Taiwan is "always clear-cut, consistent and firm." Summing up the policy, Ge said Beijing adheres to the "One-China policy" and to the principle of peaceful reunification, places hope in the people on Taiwan and opposes Taiwan independence. Admiral Fallon responded that the United States position on the Taiwan issue is also very clear and objective. The United States expects the people of China and Taiwan to resolve their differences without conflict and will base its policies and actions on that goal.

Participants  
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¶7. (U) U.S. Participants:

Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, United States Pacific Command  
Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr.  
Ravic Huso, Political Advisor, Department of State, United States Pacific Command  
Brig. Gen. Ralph Jodice, Defense Attache  
COL Bob Brown, Executive Assistant, United States Pacific Command  
Lt COL Sesh Munipalli, Special Assistant to the

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Commander, United States Pacific Command  
CAPT Kevin Ketchmark, Navy Attache  
MAJ Roger Cavazos, China desk officer, United States Pacific Command  
Embassy Poloff, Notetaker

¶8. (U) PRC Participants:

General Ge Zhenfeng, Deputy Chief of the General Staff  
Senior Colonel Li Ji  
LTC Dong Xilin  
COL Huang Xuepin  
CAPT Cheng Kai  
MGEN Qian Lihua

¶9. (U) Admiral Fallon has cleared this cable.  
RANDT